Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

Monday, April 2, 2007
Volume 43—Number 13
Pages 373–393

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Editor's Note: The President was at Camp David, MD, on March 30, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for $80.00 per year ($137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for $93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is $3.00 ($3.75 for foreign mailing).

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Week Ending Friday, March 30, 2007

Memorandum on Assignment of Functions Under Section 530 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, and Section 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as Amended

March 23, 2007

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Assignment of Functions under Section 530 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, and Section 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as Amended

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code, I hereby assign to you:

(1) the functions of the President under section 530 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103–236) (22 U.S.C. 2429a–2); and

(2) the functions of the President under section 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended (12 U.S.C. 635).

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

March 24, 2007

Good morning. The position of U.S. attorney is one of the most important jobs in the Justice Department. U.S. attorneys are appointed by the President, and they play a leading role in prosecuting crime and protecting the public.

In recent months, the Justice Department determined that new leadership in several of these positions would better serve the country. I strongly support the Attorney General in this decision. I also appreciate the hard work and service of the U.S. attorneys who resigned, and I regret that their resignations have turned into a public spectacle.

Earlier this week, my administration presented to Congress a reasonable way forward that balances the constitutional prerogatives of the Presidency with Congress's interest in learning more facts behind the decision to replace 8 of the 93 U.S. attorneys. Members of Congress now face a choice, whether they will waste time and provoke an unnecessary confrontation or whether they will join us in working to do the people's business. We have many important issues before us, so we need to put partisan politics aside and come together to enact important legislation for the American people.

One of the most urgent legislative priorities is to fund our troops fighting the war on terror. I've asked Congress to pass an emergency war spending bill that gives our troops what they need, without strings and without delay. Instead, a narrow majority in the House of Representatives decided yesterday to make a political statement. The emergency war spending bill they voted for would cut the number of troops below the level our military commanders say they need to accomplish the mission. It would set an artificial timetable for withdrawal that would allow the enemy to wait us out. And it would require an army of lawyers to meet the conditions imposed by politicians in Washington who are substituting their own judgment for that of our generals in Iraq. I have made it clear that I will veto any such bill, and it is clear that my veto would be sustained.

To get the votes they needed to pass the bill, the Democrats who control the House also included billions of dollars in domestic

and porkbarrel spending for local congressional districts. This spending includes things like $74 million for peanut storage, $25 million for spinach growers, and a host of other spending items that have nothing to do with the war. Even with all this extra spending tacked on, the vote in the House was very close. This means that the Democrats do not have enough votes to override my veto.

By choosing to make a political statement and passing a bill they know will never become law, the Democrats in Congress have only delayed the delivery of the vital funds and resources our troops need. The clock is running. The Secretary of Defense has warned that if Congress does not approve the emergency funding for our troops by April 15th, our men and women in uniform will face significant disruptions, and so will their families. April 15th is also about the same time that Congress returns from its Easter vacation. Members of Congress need to put our troops first, not politics. They need to send me a clean bill, without conditions, without restrictions, and without pork.

This is an important moment for our Nation, and it is an important moment for the new Congress. My administration has presented a reasonable way forward on the matter of U.S. attorneys and on ensuring that our men and women in uniform have the funds and the flexibility they need to win in Iraq. It is not too late for us to work together. For the good of our Nation, I ask the Democratic leaders in Congress to seize the opportunity before us and move beyond political statements to bipartisan action.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1 p.m. on March 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Automobile Makers

March 26, 2007

The President. I've just spent quite a while talking to our CEOs of American automobile companies. And I was interested in their take on my goal of reducing gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

I found it very interesting that by 2012, 50 percent of the automobiles in America will be flex-fuel vehicles. That means that the American consumer will be able to either use gasoline or ethanol, depending upon, obviously, price and convenience. That's a major technological breakthrough for the country. If you want to reduce gasoline usage, like I believe we need to do so for national security reasons as well as for environmental concerns, the consumer has got to be in a position to make a rational choice. And so I appreciate very much the fact that American automobile manufacturers recognize the reality of the world in which we live and are using new technologies to give the consumers different options.

Right now, most of our ethanol is made from corn. But the Federal Government is spending a lot of money to try to develop new technologies that will mean that ethanol could be made from wood chips or switch grass. Part of that request is embedded in a request to the Congress, and I would hope that Congress would move expeditiously on our plan to reduce gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years. It's in our national security interest that we do this; it's in economic security interest we do it; and, all at the same time, it will help us be better stewards of the environment.

And now I'd like to ask these gentlemen to make a few comments. Go ahead, Rick.

G. Richard Wagoner, Jr. Yes, I'd just—from General Motors' perspective, we very much share the President's vision, and we definitely see a path through to both lower oil consumption, lower amounts of imported oil, and fewer carbon emissions. And obviously, near-term opportunity that we are moving on right now, as the President cited, is flex-fuel vehicles that are powered by E–85 ethanol. There are millions on the road

today. As a group, we've agreed to double our production by the year 2010 and then have 50 percent of our production E–85-capable by the year 2012. This makes a big difference, and there's nothing that can be done which can reduce the curve of growth in imported oil and actually turn it down like using E–85, taking advantage of what's there today.

So we look forward to the opportunity to work closely with the administration, the Congress to increase the production of ethanol and to improve the distribution. And on the manufacturer's side, we look very, very much forward to playing our role in that process as well.

The President. Thank you—[*inaudible*].

Alan Mulally. Well, I might add to what Rick said, that we at Ford absolutely are supportive of the President's goal, both for energy efficiency and independence and to be good stewards of our environment.

One of the neat things about the conversation, again, today, on the continuing dialog that we've had, is being able to—for the United States system to have options and have flexibility. And the fact that we have ethanol solutions today, hybrids coming along, and plus hydrogen and fuel cells and new battery technology, gives some great options to satisfy our need for flexibility, as well as being good stewards of the environment.

So, Mr. President, we appreciate the leadership, and we look forward to working with you going forward.

Thomas W. LaSorda. Well, DaimlerChrysler, which includes the Mercedes Car Group, the Freightliner, and other truck divisions in the Chrysler Group, we've committed as well, by 2012, to have 50 percent of our production not only in E–85 but biodiesel. This Jeep Grand Cherokee here today is going into production as we speak, being shipped from the factory with B–5.

So we're very committed to this as well, and we think this is the answer for America to lower our dependence on foreign oil.

Thank you.

The President. One of the things that I think it's important for the American taxpayer to understand is that we're using some of their dollars to promote new technologies, and we're working with these CEOs and their respective companies to advance new technologies. They're on the leading edge of technological change, and it's in our interest to help promote these new technologies that are coming to the market.

And I'm excited about the future. I'm optimistic we can meet our goal. I look forward to working with Congress to do so. And I appreciate you all coming today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. Participating in the meeting were G. Richard Wagoner, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, General Motors Corp.; Alan Mulally, president and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Co.; and Thomas W. LaSorda, president and chief executive officer, Chrysler Group, DaimlerChrysler.

Proclamation 8116—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2007

March 26, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

A future of hope and opportunity in America requires that all our children develop the knowledge and character they need in life. On Education and Sharing Day, we recognize our responsibility to ensure that our young people have the foundation necessary to lead lives rich in purpose and fulfillment.

Education and Sharing Day honors the legacy of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson and emphasizes our commitment to teach the next generation of Americans the values that make our country strong. The Lubavitcher Rebbe believed that society should "make a new commitment to kindness," and he helped to establish education and outreach centers offering social service programs and humanitarian aid around the world.

The character of our young people is strengthened by serving a cause greater than self and by the anchor of virtues, including courage and compassion. By instilling a spirit of service in our children, we create a more optimistic future for them and our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America,

by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 30, 2007, as Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A. I call upon government officials, educators, volunteers, and all the people of the United States to reach out to young people and work to create a better, brighter, and more hopeful future for all.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:53 a.m., March 28, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 27, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 29.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Executives of Large Vehicle Fleet Operations

March 27, 2007

Mr. Secretary, thank you. I want to thank you all very much.

Yesterday I talked with the chief executive officers of U.S. auto companies about what they're doing to help us meet the goal of reducing gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years. Today I've had the honor of visiting with private sector companies—"Big Brown," FedEx, the Metro bus line, as well as the Postal Office folks, and DaimlerChrysler as well to talk about how we are using new technologies to convert truck fleets, bus fleets to vehicles that will be able to help meet the goal of reducing gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years.

The reason I've come is, I want the American people to understand that there are new technologies on the market that are being used every single day, but there's more we can do. I'm looking forward to working with Congress to meet this goal. And they need to pass meaningful energy legislation as soon as possible, all aiming at making sure that we promote technologies that, for the sake of our national security and for the sake of good environmental policy, we reduce the usage of gasoline.

The goal I laid out of reducing gasoline by 20 percent over 10 years is a realistic goal. In other words, this isn't a pipedream; this is something that our Nation can accomplish. It's going to take more research dollars; it's going to take working with the private sector; and it's going to take innovative leadership. And I thank the folks here who are representing companies that have got innovative leadership, people willing to make use of technologies that change the way we drive and will change the way we live.

So I appreciate you all being with me. It's an honor to be with you. Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. at the U.S. Postal Service Vehicle Maintenance Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman.

Remarks on White House Press Secretary Tony Snow

March 27, 2007

This morning I got a phone call from Tony Snow. He called me from the hospital. He told me that when they went in and operated on him, they found cancer. It's a recurrence of the cancer that he thought that he had successfully dealt with in the past. His attitude is, one, that he is not going to let this whip him, and he's upbeat. My attitude is, is that we need to pray for him and for his family.

Obviously, a lot of folks here in the White House worry a lot about their friend, as do Laura and I. And so my message to Tony is, stay strong; a lot of people love you and care for you and will pray for you. And we're hoping for all the best. I'm looking forward to the day that he comes back to the White House and briefs the press corps on the decisions that I'm making and why I'm making them. In the meantime, I hope our fellow citizens offer a prayer to he and his family.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:54 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Proclamation 8117—National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2007

March 27, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

All Americans share a responsibility to protect our Nation's children. During National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we renew our commitment to prevent child abuse and neglect and to work to enable our children to realize their full potential.

Childhood is a formative time, and abuse can have devastating long-term effects on young lives. In order to provide a safe environment for our young people, parents must work to protect their children from the dangers that threaten them. Family members, educators, public officials, and faith-based and community organizations all play important roles in helping to ensure that children are safe and can grow surrounded by love and stability.

My Administration is committed to supporting children and promoting safe and stable families across America. Last year, I signed into law the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006, which will help to prevent and address child abuse and neglect by improving child welfare services and continuing vital mentoring and family programs. Additionally, the Department of Justice's Project Safe Childhood program and the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 help officials at all levels of government protect our children and bring sexual and online predators, Internet pornographers who prey on our children, and other violent criminals to justice with stronger laws and improved coordination among authorities.

As we observe National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we underscore our commitment to building an America where all children can thrive, develop character, and learn to be responsible citizens in an environment of security and love. By honoring our obligation to support and protect our young people, all Americans have an opportunity to make a positive difference in the life of a child and build a brighter future for our country. For more information about how each of us can help stop child abuse, please visit childwelfare.gov.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2007 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I encourage all citizens to help protect our children and work to create strong, healthy communities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:45 a.m., March 29, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 30.

Remarks to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association

March 28, 2007

Alright. Thanks for having me. Thank you. Please be seated. Not a bad introduction by a cowboy. [*Laughter*] Thanks for having me. Welcome to Washington. I'm glad to be with you. I was telling Laura this morning, I'm really looking forward to going over to talk to the Nation's cattlemen. I appreciate being with people who understand the importance of faith, family, hard work, good values. I like to remind people, every day is Earth Day if you make a living off the land. It's good to be with fellow conservationists.

I'm going to talk a little bit about two big priorities: one, how to keep this economy strong so people can make a living; and secondly, how this country needs to stay resolved and firm in protecting the security of our country. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come over and visit.

I do want to thank John Queen. I want to thank the board of directors. Thanks for being here and making your voices heard. You can influence the debate in Washington. And this is a town where people do listen to other people's voices. I've got a few suggestions for you when you go up to Capitol Hill. [*Laughter*] But before I give them, I do want to recognize Senator Craig Thomas from the State of Wyoming and Marilyn Musgrave from Colorado. Appreciate you both being here.

Let me talk about how to keep this economy growing. You know, one of the main jobs of government is to create the conditions for economic growth. A main job of government is not to try to create wealth. In other words, the fundamental question we've got to ask here in Washington is, what do we need to do to encourage investment and risk-takers and to encourage entrepreneurship? And I believe the heart of good economic policy is keeping people's taxes low.

You know, I—[*applause*]. The reason I say that is, there's a fundamental debate in Washington, when you really get down to it, and the debate is who best to spend your money. [*Laughter*] And I believe a cattleman can spend their money better than the government can. Now, obviously, we need some amount of money here, and that's called setting priorities. But beyond that, the best way to keep this economy growing is to let you keep more of your own tax money. The tax cuts we passed are working.

You know, when you cut the individual tax rates, you affect farmers and ranchers. Many farmers and ranchers are subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships or sole proprietorships, which means you pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And if you're worried about a vibrant agricultural economy, it makes sense to let those who work the land keep more of their own money so they can invest, so they can make the necessary changes so that their businesses can remain vibrant.

I say, the tax cuts work. Since we enacted major tax reform in 2003, in response to recession and a terrorist attack, this economy of ours has created more than 7 million jobs, new jobs, and it's expanded 13 percent. The tax cuts are working, and the United States Congress needs to make those tax cuts permanent.

Now, one of the taxes that concerns you a lot, I know, is the death tax. It should. You get taxed while you're living, and then you get taxed after you die. It's double taxation at its worst. We put the death tax on the road to extinction. Notice I didn't say, "It is going to be extinct." Under current law, it will come back into effect in 2011, which puts people in an awkward position in 2010. [*Laughter*]

I really believe Congress needs to pay attention to the effects of the death tax on our farmers and ranchers. If people are concerned about keeping land in the hands of the family rancher, the best way to do so is to get rid of the death tax for those who ranch the land, once and for all.

When you're working the Halls of Congress, I hope you work hard on the death tax issue. There's no excuse not to get rid of it. Now, you'll hear people say, "We don't want to give tax relief to the billionaires." Okay, fine, but let's put a bill on the President's desk that respects the ranchers of the United States of America and the farmers and the small-business owners, and I'll sign it.

To keep the economy growing, we've got to be wise about our budgets. Now what you'll hear here in Washington is, we have got to raise your taxes in order to balance the budget. That's not the way Washington, DC, works. They will raise your taxes and figure out new ways to spend your money. [*Laughter*] All I do is ask you to look at the budget that the Senate just recently passed. You know, we changed hands here in Washington in the Senate and the House. And the new leadership there in the Senate passed a new budget which raises taxes so they can increase spending, and the House is looking at the same type of approach.

I have a different view. My attitude is, keep the taxes low so the economy grows to generate more tax revenues, and don't overspend; to set priorities with the people's money, not try to be all things to all people. And so I submitted a budget to the House and the Senate that balances the budget in 5 years without raising one dime on the working people of the United States of America.

I'm looking forward to working with you on a farm bill that's good and decent and fair. I just put up a—submitted some ideas through our Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns. I want to remind you that in the bill we've submitted to Congress, we asked for a $17 billion increase in conservation spending over a 10-year period. That's an increase over the last farm bill. That includes money for CRP and a 30-percent increase for equip, plus one point three-quarters billion dollars on water conservation programs. I think this is a wise use of our money.

I'm interested in a farm bill that enhances conservation, that recognizes the contribution our ranchers make, that is fair, that is reform oriented, and helps us compete in the global marketplace. I appreciate your efforts to work on a good farm bill. I'm looking forward to working with you on it.

Finally, to keep the economy growing, we ought to open up markets for U.S. goods and services. If you're interested in economic vitality and growth, the way to encourage that growth is to find new markets for U.S. products. And I want to spend a little time talking about trade today.

Last year, the United States exported $1.4 trillion worth of goods and services. That makes us the largest exporter in the world. To me, that says, is that when we have opportunities that are fair, we produce the kinds of goods and services people want to buy. Every time we break down a barrier to trade, it makes it more likely somebody who's raising a cow will have an opportunity to sell that cow into a better market. Free trade lowers consumer prices. In other words, when you open up trade, it's good for consumers.

Trade is good for people working. I don't know if you realize this or not, but jobs exported by—supported by exports pay wages that are 13 to 18 percent higher than the average. If you manufacture a good that is sold overseas, you're making more money than somebody who's not exporting. Isn't that an interesting fact?

I happen to believe competition is good. I believe competition brings out the best in everybody. So I don't mind competition, so long as the playing rules are fair. My attitude on trade is, you treat us the way we treat you, and then let's compete. America is 5 percent of the world's population, which means 95 percent of the rest of the world are potential customers for things that we grow or manufacture.

I think it's good business to open up trade agreements. When I came into office, we only had trade agreements with 3 nations; now we have 11 of them in force and more on the way. The countries that America has free trade agreements with represent 7 percent of the world's GDP, yet they account for 43 percent of our exports. The reason I bring this up to you is, there's a lot of room for expansion when it comes to trade. There's a lot of opportunity.

And so this administration is committed to open up markets. And there's a vital vote getting ready to come up in front of the—up to the Congress, and that is agreements that we have cut with Peru, Colombia, and Panama. I believe these are important markets for you and important markets for U.S. goods and services. Congress needs to make sure that they send an affirmative message when it comes to trade on these three agreements.

Now, trade obviously creates issues. We end up with disputes and opportunities for people to make mischief when it comes to trade, people to use excuses for not opening up markets. And we went through one of those periods with you all, and that is with the BSE issue. BSE was discovered in 2003, and we worked with our cattle folks aggressively to address the issue, to prevent further introduction and spread of the disease. In other words, there was a proactive effort by government and the cattle raisers to address the issue.

During the last 3 years, we've conducted over 800,000 tests to assess the health of our cattle herds. Thanks to these and other science-based measures, we've helped the farmers and ranchers manage any possible BSE risk in the cattle population. And today, because of our collaborative efforts and a strong scientific approach to dealing with BSE, we can say to global consumers with complete assurance, "American beef is safe, and it is good to eat."

And the word is getting out. In 2006, exports of beef and beef products totaled more

than $2 billion. That's a—nearly a 50-percent increase from 2005. It's not at the levels we want, but there has been some improvement in sales. And that's important for you. The more markets there are that are open for your product, the easier it's going to be for you to make a living. And I understand that, and it's important for Congress to understand that as well.

Today, more than 100 countries have fully or partially opened their markets to U.S. beef. The objective of this administration, however, is to make sure that they're better than partially opened; they're fully opened, including to countries like Japan and Korea. We're also working to open up markets that have still got a ban on our imports. In other words, this is an important part of our foreign policy. When I'm talking to leaders and they've got an issue with American beef, it's on the agenda. I say, "If you want to get the attention of the American people in a positive way, you open up your markets to U.S. beef." People understand that, when it comes to being treated fairly in the world marketplace.

We got an opportunity to expand further—open up further markets by expanding trade through the Doha round of the World Trade Organization. It gives us a chance to level the playing field. It gives us a chance so that I can say to our cattle raisers and others that, "You'll be treated fairly." Now, you got to compete; you got to grow some product that somebody wants. But you should be treated fairly. The rules will treat you fairly. That's all you can expect.

And so I want you to know that we're going to work hard to bring Doha to a successful conclusion. It's hard work. This weekend, the President of Brazil is coming to see me, and we'll be talking about how we can work together to open up markets, and at the same time, address their concerns about our farm issues.

The only way that we can complete Doha and make headway on other trade agreements, however, is for Congress to extend trade promotion authority. This authority allows the President to negotiate complicated trade deals and then send them to the United States Congress for an up-or-down vote on the whole agreement. Presidents of both parties have considered this a incredibly important tool for completing trade agreements. In other words, our trade partners have got to say, "If that's the deal we negotiate, that's the one that somebody is going to have to vote up or down on." You can't negotiate a deal in fairness with the United States if you think it's going to be changed on the floor of the Congress. So the up-or-down vote is important to get, and that's what you get when you get trade promotion authority.

And yet this authority will expire on July the 1st unless Congress acts. And I want to thank the National Cattlemen's Beef Association for joining with the administration and other organizations in urging the Congress to renew trade promotion authority.

Look, there's going to be a vigorous debate about trade in Congress, and I thank you for engaging in that debate. And you know, trashing trade will make a good sound bite on the evening news—[*laughter*]—but walling off America from the rest of the world would harm this economy, and it would harm our cattle raisers. The road to protectionism may seem broad and inviting, yet it ends in danger and decline. So I urge Congress to reject protectionism and to keep this economy open to tremendous opportunities that the world has to offer for our ranchers and farmers and entrepreneurs.

Just as our prosperity depends on rejecting economic isolationism, so too our security depends on rejecting calls for America to abandon its leadership in this world. September the 11th is an important moment in this country's history. It's a sad moment, but it should serve as a wake-up call to the realities of the world in which we live.

On September the 11th, we saw problems originating in a failed state some 7,000 miles away that affected how we live. See, September the 11th was not only a day we were attacked; it is a day that our country must never forget. And the lessons of that day must never be forgot, that what happens overseas matters here at home. It may be tempting to say, "Oh, just let it run its natural course." But for me, allowing the world to run its natural course, which could lead to more violence and hatred, would end up reducing the security of the United States, not enhancing the security. And our biggest job

in America, the biggest job of this government is to protect you from harm.

I think about it every day, and so do a lot of other good, decent citizens of this country. The best way to protect this country is to defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. And for the long-term peace and security of this country, we must advance an ideology that stands in stark contrast to the ideology of the killers. The best way to secure this homeland is to stay on the offense, and in the meantime, encourage the spread of liberty as an alternative to tyranny.

And it's hard work, but it is necessary work. We went into Afghanistan, and we did so to remove a vicious tyranny that had harbored terrorists who planned the 9/11 attacks on our country. Our message was, if you provide safe haven, if you provide comfort to an enemy, you're just as guilty as the enemy. And so, along with allies, we captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida and Taliban fighters; we closed down their training camps; we helped the people of Afghanistan replace the Taliban regime with a democratic government. And it's in our Nation's long-term interests that we help the people of Afghanistan survive the threats and onslaughts by people who want to reinstate tyranny.

And then we went into Iraq, and we removed the dictator who was a threat to the United States and to the world. And now we're undertaking the difficult and dangerous work of helping the Iraqi people establish a functioning democracy that can protect their own people and serve as an ally in this global war against those who would do America harm.

In 2005—I want you to remember—in 2005, the Iraqi people held three national elections. Oh, it seems like a decade ago, doesn't it? And yet in the march of history, it's not all that long ago that the Iraqi people showed up at the election box, after having lived under the thumb of a brutal and murderous tyrant, to express their will about the future of their country. They chose a transitional government. They adopted the most progressive, democratic Constitution in the Arab world, and then they elected a Government underneath that Constitution. Despite the endless threats from killers, nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote, in a show of hope and solidarity that the United States should never forget.

A thinking enemy watched all this. See, there are some who can't stand the thought of a free society emerging in their midst. And this enemy escalated attacks. Al Qaida is very active in Iraq. And they and other Sunni extremists blew up one of the most sacred places in Shi'a Islam, the Golden Mosque of Samarra. Why did they do that? They did that to provoke retaliation. They did that to cause people to take up—arm themselves. And they succeeded. Radical Shi'a elements, some of whom have received support from Iran, increased their support of death squads, and then the situation began to escalate.

And so I had a choice to make. Last fall, I looked at the facts; I consulted with a lot of folks in Congress and our military commanders. And my choice really boiled down to this: Do we withdraw our troops and let violence spiral out of control, let this young democracy fail, or do I send reinforcements to help the Iraqis quell the violence and secure their capital? In other words, do we give them breathing space to get on the path of reconciliation so that this young democracy could survive?

Well, I weighed the options, and the military commanders and I concluded that the consequences of withdrawal would be disastrous for the United States of America. And let me tell you why. If we were to step back from Baghdad before it was more secure, before the Government could secure its own capital, it would leave a security vacuum. And into that vacuum could quickly come Sunni and Shi'a extremists, bolstered by outside forces. A contagion of violence could spill out across the country, and in time, the violence of these emboldened extremists could affect the entire region. The terrorists could emerge from chaos—see, they benefit when the situation is chaotic—with new safe havens to replace the one they had lost in Afghanistan.

There's no doubt in my mind that their intention is to try to strike us again, and they need the resources and the safe haven to do so. If we were to abandon this young democracy to chaos, it would embolden these extremists, it would enable them to be able to

recruit more, it would give them new resources from which to plot and plan. I believe the consequences of failure in Iraq affect the security of the United States of America, and that's why I made the decision I made.

And so instead of retreating, we reinforced—troops led by a capable commander named General David Petraeus. The Iraqi Government saw our firm support, and they're now beginning to carry out an aggressive plan to secure their nation's capital. And the plan is still in the beginning stages. I mean, General Petraeus had been on the ground just for about 2 months. Only half of the reinforcements that he needs have arrived. And he says it's going to be early June before all the troops that are dedicated to the operation are even in place. In other words, I've sent reinforcements into Baghdad with a new commander, with a plan to help the Iraqis secure the capital, a plan that we believe will be successful. He's been there for about 2 months; half the troops that he needs have arrived.

And, look, I recognize it's going to require a sustained, determined effort to succeed; I know that. And there are some early signs that are encouraging. I mean, for example, the Iraqi leader has appointed a commander for Baghdad who is working closely with our generals. The last of the nine Iraqi surge battalions arrived in the Iraqi capital. In other words, they said, "We're going to commit troops to this plan to secure the capital," and they're delivering. The Iraqis are showing up. Iraqi leaders have lifted restrictions that once prevented Iraqi and American forces from going into areas like Sadr City. You've been reading about Sadr City; well, my attitude is, murderers are murderers, and they ought to be brought to justice. And so any political restrictions preventing our people are being lifted. Iraqis are in the lead, and we're helping them.

We're now setting up checkpoints across Baghdad. When I say "we," that is the Iraqis with American help. They're hardening perimeters around markets and areas that have been targets for these spectacular attacks, all aimed at shaking the confidence of the American people and shaking the confidence of the Iraqi people. We've got joint security stations throughout the Iraqi capital. In the past, we would clear an area, and then we'd go home, and then the insurgents or killers would move back in. Now we've got a strategy of clear, hold—and that's what that means—and then using money to help reconstruct Iraq. By the way, most of the money is coming from the Iraqis—he's put out a $10 billion reconstruction budget. That's what we expect. A government of and by the people should be spending the people's money to help rebuild their country.

American forces are now deployed 24 hours in these neighborhoods, and guess what's happening? The Iraqi people are beginning to gain confidence. Support from the Iraqi people can be measured by the tips our people are getting—in other words, people saying, "So-and-so is over here; a cache of weapons over there." And we're using the tips to aggressively pursue. We've launched successful operations against Shi'a extremists. We've captured hundreds of fighters that are spreading sectarian violence. In other words, we're after killers. We're after—we don't say, this religious group or this religious group. We're saying, if you're trying to destabilize this young democracy, the Iraqis, with coalition help, are coming after you.

Last week, we captured a Shi'a extremist leader and his associates who were implicated in the kidnaping and murder of five U.S. soldiers in Karbala. Last month, American and Iraqi forces uncovered more than 400 weapons caches. We're conducting dozens and dozens of operations on a daily basis throughout that country with the Iraqi forces.

See, ultimately, the Iraqis are going to have to defend themselves. Ultimately, it is their responsibility. That's what the 12 million people who voted want. We just need to give them some breathing space so they can gain their confidence and have the capabilities necessary to protect this country.

We're destroying bomb factories. Just last week, we captured the head of the Al Qaida bomb network, responsible for some of the most horrific bombings in Baghdad. It's interesting, I mentioned Al Qaida; Al Qaida wants us to fail in Iraq. This is what their leaders have clearly said, and they're willing to kill innocent women and children to achieve their objectives.

The missions I described are only the opening salvos in what is going to be a sustained effort. Yet the Iraqi people are beginning to say—see positive changes. I want to share with you how two Iraqi bloggers—they have bloggers in Baghdad, just like we've got here—[*laughter*]—describe—"Displaced families are returning home. Marketplaces are seeing more activity. Stores that were long shuttered are now reopening. We feel safer about moving in the city now. Our people want to see this effort succeed. We hope the Governments in Baghdad and America do not lose their resolve."

I want to read something that Army Sergeant Major Chris Nadeau says—the guy is on his second tour in Iraq. He says, "I'm not a Democrat or a Republican. I'm a soldier. The facts are the facts. Things are getting better. We're picking up momentum."

These are hopeful signs, and that's positive. Yet at the very moment that General Petraeus's strategy is beginning to show signs of success, the Democrats in the House of Representatives have passed an emergency war spending bill that undercuts him and the troops under his command. This bill would damage our effort in Iraq three ways.

First, the House bill would impose restrictions on our commanders in Iraq, as well as rigid conditions and arbitrary deadlines on the Iraqi Government. It would mandate a precipitous withdrawal of American forces if every one of these conditions is not met by a date certain. Even if they are met, the bill would still require that most American forces begin retreating from Iraq by March 1st of next year, regardless of conditions on the ground. It's unclear what the military significance of this date is. What is clear is that the consequences of imposing such a specific and random date for withdrawal would be disastrous.

If the House bill becomes law, our enemies in Iraq would simply have to mark their calendars. They'd spend the months ahead picking how to use their new—plotting how to use their new safe havens once we were to leave. It makes no sense for politicians in Washington, DC, to be dictating arbitrary timelines for our military commanders in a war zone 6,000 miles away.

I want to read to you what a major newspaper editorial page said—and by the way, this editorial page, like, generally is not singing my praises—[*laughter*]—"Imagine if Dwight Eisenhower had been forced to adhere to a congressional war plan in scheduling the Normandy landings—or if, in 1863, President Lincoln had been forced by Congress to conclude the Civil War the following year. This is the worst kind of congressional meddling in military strategy."

Second, the House bill also undermines the Iraqi Government and contradicts the Democrats' claim that they simply want to help the Iraqis solve their own problems. For example, the House bill would cut funding for the Iraqi security forces if Iraqi leaders did not meet arbitrary deadlines.

The Democrats cannot have it both ways. They can't say that the Iraqis must do more, and then take away the funds that will help them do so. Iraq is a young democracy. It is fighting for its survival in a region that is vital to our security. The lesson of September the 11th must not be forgot. To cut off support for the security forces would put our own security at risk.

Third, the House bill would add billions of dollars in domestic spending that is completely unrelated to the war. For example, the bill includes $74 million for peanut storage, $25 million for spinach growers. These may be emergencies; they may be problems; but they can be addressed in the normal course of business. They don't need to be added on to a bill that's supporting our troops. There's $6.4 million for the House of Representatives's salaries and expenses account. I don't know what that is—[*laughter*]—but it is not related to the war and protecting the United States of America.

This week, the Senate is considering a version that is no better. The Senate bill sets an arbitrary date for withdrawal. It also undermines the Iraqi Government's ability to take more responsibility for their own country by cutting funds for Iraqi reconstruction and law enforcement. And just like their colleagues in the House, Senate Democrats have loaded their bill with special interest spending.

The bill includes $40 million for tree assistance. You know, all these matters may be

important matters; they don't need to be loaded on to a bill that is an emergency spending bill for our troops. There's $3.5 million for visitors to tour the Capitol and see for themselves how Congress works. [*Laughter*] I'm not kidding you. [*Laughter*]

Here's the bottom line: The House and Senate bills have too much pork, too many conditions on our commanders, and an artificial timetable for withdrawal. And I have made it clear for weeks, if either version comes to my desk, I'm going to veto it. It is also clear from the strong opposition in both Houses that my veto would be sustained. Yet Congress continues to pursue these bills, and as they do, the clock is ticking for our troops in the field. Funding for our forces in Iraq will begin to run out in mid-April. Members of Congress need to stop making political statements and start providing vital funds for our troops. They need to get that bill to my desk so I can sign it into law.

Now some of them believe that by delaying funding for our troops, they can force me to accept restrictions on our commanders that I believe would make withdrawal and defeat more likely. That's not going to happen. If Congress fails to pass a bill to fund our troops on the frontlines, the American people will know who to hold responsible. Our troops in Iraq deserve the full support of the Congress and the full support of this Nation.

I know when you see somebody in the uniform, you praise them, and I thank you for that. And we need to praise those military families too, that are strong, standing by their loved one in this mighty struggle to defend this country. They risk their lives to fight a brutal and determined enemy, an enemy that has no respect for human life.

We saw that brutality in a recent attack. Just 2 weeks ago, terrorists in Baghdad put two children in the back of an explosive-laden car, and they used them to get the car past a security checkpoint. And once through, the terrorists fled the vehicle and detonated the car with the children inside. Some call this civil war; others call it emergency. I call it pure evil. And that evil that uses children in a terrorist attack in Iraq is the same evil that inspired and rejoiced in the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. And that evil must be defeated overseas so we don't have to face them here again.

If we cannot muster the resolve to defeat this evil in Iraq, America will have lost its moral purpose in the world and we will endanger our citizens, because if we leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy will follow us here. Prevailing in Iraq is not going to be easy. Four years after this war began, the nature of the fight has changed, but this is a fight that can be won. We can have confidence in the outcome, because this Nation has done this kind of work before.

You know, following World War II, after we fought bitter enemies, we lifted up the defeated nations of Japan and Germany and stood with them as they built their representative governments. We committed years and resources to this cause, and the effort has been repaid many times over in three generations of friendship and peace. After the Korean war, had you predicted that Korea would have been a major trading partner in the world or Japan would have been a major trading partner and vibrant economy or China would be developing an open market and the Far East would be relatively peaceful, they'd have called you a hopeless idealist. And yet, because of America presence and influence, the Far East has emerged as I've described it.

The stakes are high in the efforts we're undertaking in Iraq. It's a part of a long ideological struggle against those who spread hatred and lack of hope and lack of opportunity. But I believe, with patience and resolve, we will succeed. The efforts we're undertaking today will affect a generation of Americans who are coming up in our society.

You know, it's important for you to understand that the Iraqi people want to live in freedom and peace. I believe strongly in the universality of liberty. I believe people want to be free, and if given a chance, they will take the risks necessary to be free. And that's what's happened in Iraq. We see the desire for liberty in Iraqi soldiers who risk their lives every day. We see the desire in the shopkeepers and civic leaders who are working to reform their neighborhoods. We see it in the desire of Iraqi moms and dads who want

the same thing for their children that we want for our children.

If we stand by the Iraqi people today and help them develop their young Iraqi-style democracy, they're going to be able to take responsibility for their own security. And when that day comes, our forces can come home, and that we will leave behind a stable country that can serve as an example for others and be an ally in this global struggle against those who would do us harm. It's tough work, but it's necessary work—work the United States has done before, and work the United States will complete now.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. at the Holiday Inn on the Hill. In his remarks, he referred to John M. Queen III, president-elect, National Cattlemen's Beef Association; President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar, Iraqi commander of Baghdad, Iraqi Army; Qais Khazali, member, Khazali network, and Shi'a extremist leader; and Haytham Kazim Abdallah Al-Shimari, head of the Rusafa Al Qaida-Iraq bomb network.

Proclamation 8118—National Donate Life Month, 2007

March 28, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Donating organs, marrow, and tissue is a kind and compassionate act that can protect and enhance the precious gift of life. During National Donate Life Month, we recognize the generosity of donors and raise awareness of the importance of donating.

In recent years, there has been great progress in this important effort, and the rate of organ donation has steadily increased—helping save thousands of lives. Despite this success, more than 95,000 Americans currently await organ transplants, and hundreds more are added to the transplant list each month. My Administration strongly supports organ, marrow, and tissue donation, and we are working with public and private groups to help more citizens understand the impact of organ donation.

Americans who wish to become organ and tissue donors can register with their State's donor registry, designate their intent on their driver's license, and sign and carry donor cards, which are available at organdonor.gov. I urge all citizens to consider becoming donors and encourage all donors to inform their loved ones of their decision so their wishes can be fulfilled. Every human life holds inherent dignity and matchless value, and National Donate Life Month is an opportunity to celebrate our country's organ and tissue donors. The decision to donate the gift of life demonstrates the compassionate spirit of our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2007 as National Donate Life Month. I call upon health care professionals, volunteers, educators, government agencies, faith-based and community groups, and private organizations to help raise awareness of the urgent need for organ and tissue donors throughout our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:45 a.m., March 29, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 30.

Remarks at the Radio and Television Correspondents' Association Dinner

March 28, 2007

Thank you, Brian. Laura and I are happy to be here. I'd like to thank the Radio and TV Correspondents' Association for providing dinner tonight. And I'd like to thank Senator Webb for providing security. [*Laughter*]

I'm glad to see everybody here is enjoying themselves. Don't think I haven't noticed all the drinking that's been going on—[*laughter*]—in my State of the Union Address, I said we needed to increase the use of ethanol. [*Laughter*]

Well, where should I start? A year ago, my approval rating was in the thirties, my nominee for the Supreme Court had just withdrawn, and my Vice President had shot someone. [*Laughter*] Ahhh, those were the good old days. [*Laughter*] Sorry the Vice President couldn't be here. [*Laughter*] He's had a rough few weeks. To be honest, his feelings are kind of hurt. He said he was going on vacation to Afghanistan, where people like him. [*Laughter*]

You in the press certainly have had a lot to report lately. Take the current controversy. I have to admit, we really blew the way we let those attorneys go. You know you've botched it when people sympathize with lawyers. [*Laughter*]

Speaking of subpoenas, it's good to see Speaker Pelosi tonight. [*Laughter*] You know, some have wondered how the two of us would get along. Some say she's bossy; she's opinionated; she's not to be crossed—hey, I get along with my mother. [*Laughter*]

But between the Congress and the press, there is a lot of scrutiny in this job. Not a day goes by that I don't get scrutineered one way or the other. [*Laughter*] The press is a lot tougher the second term. It's reached the point I sometimes call on Helen Thomas just to hear a friendly voice. [*Laughter*]

No matter how tough it gets, however, I have no intention of becoming a lameduck President—unless, of course, Cheney accidentally shoots me in the leg. [*Laughter*] Hey, I have 664 days left in the White House, so technically, I'm a temporary-guest worker. [*Laughter*]

I'm considering what's next. President Clinton, of course, wrote a very successful Presidential memoirs, with 10,000 pages or something. [*Laughter*] I'm thinking of something really fun and creative for mine—you know, maybe a popup book. [*Laughter*] I'm considering a number of titles—which do you like: "How W Got His Groove Back"—[*laughter*]—"Who Moved My Presidency," or "Tuesdays With Cheney"? [*Laughter*]

By the way, I'm not sure whether or not Senator Obama is here. The last I heard, he was not coming to the Radio and TV Correspondents' dinner—not enough press. [*Laughter*] People Magazine recently had a photo of the Senator there on the beach in Hawaii, his sleek, hairless pecs glistening in the surf. [*Laughter*] It shows how biased the press is. Have you ever seen a shot like that of Denny Hastert? [*Laughter*]

Before I do sit down, I do want to say a couple of things. I'm very happy one person who could not be here last year is here tonight, and that's Bob Woodruff. Bob, we know it hasn't been easy. We admire you all the more for what you've overcome and what you're still overcoming.

And, Ava and Christine and Nicole Bloom, many of us knew your dad. And I know life is hard without him. He was such a fine guy. But one thing we've all seen this evening is that he has fine daughters, and I know he would be really proud of you.

Someone who is not here tonight is Tony Snow. When Tony called me and told me the outcome of his surgery, my heart just sank. But I know Tony is a fighter. And, Tony, we're all looking forward to the day when you come back to the White House.

Last week, we all heard the news about Elizabeth Edwards, and again, your heart just sinks for what she and her family faces. And so to Bob Woodruff, the Bloom girls, Elizabeth Edwards, Tony Snow and, of course, our men and women in uniform, Laura and I and millions of other Americans are praying for you and your families.

May God bless you, and thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:40 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Brian Wilson, vice president and bureau chief for Washington, DC, FOX News; Helen Thomas, syndicated columnist, Hearst Newspapers, and member, White House press corps; ABC News reporter Bob Woodruff, who was injured in Iraq on January 29, 2006; Ava, Christine, and Nicole Bloom, daughters of former NBC reporter David Bloom, who died in 2003 while reporting in Iraq; and Elizabeth Edwards, wife of 2008 Presidential candidate John Edwards.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Somalia
March 28, 2007

Dear _____ :

Consistent with section 1226 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109–364) and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration on Somalia. This report on our comprehensive regional strategy toward Somalia includes information about our strategy in the Horn of Africa and the efforts we are undertaking to eliminate the terrorist threat and promote stability in Somalia.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Ike Skelton, chairman, and Duncan Hunter, ranking member, House Armed Services Committee; Tom Lantos, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Silvestre Reyes, chairman, and Peter Hoekstra, ranking member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Carl Levin, chairman, and John McCain, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and John D. Rockefeller IV, chairman, and Christopher S. Bond, ranking member, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 29.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the House Republican Conference
March 29, 2007

I want to thank the Republican leadership and the Republican Members of Congress for coming down to have a very frank and open discussion about issues facing our country. Yesterday I gave a speech, making it clear that I'll veto a bill that restricts our commanders on the ground in Iraq, a bill that doesn't fund our troops, a bill that's got too much spending on it. I made that clear to the Members.

We stand united in saying loud and clear that when we've got a troop in harm's way, we expect that troop to be fully funded; and we've got commanders making tough decisions on the ground, we expect there to be no strings on our commanders; and that we expect the Congress to be wise about how they spend the people's money.

We spent time talking today about our strong belief that we've got to keep taxes low. And so we had a very productive session, a session of friends talking amongst friends, all aiming to put a strategy together of how we can work together to secure this Nation and keep it prosperous. And so I appreciate you all coming. You're welcome back at the White House any time you want to join us.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. on the North Portico at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen
March 29, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Madam Speaker, Mr. Leader, Members of Congress, Secretary Powell, distinguished guests: You know, the Speaker and I had the honor of having our picture taken with you, and as I walked into the rotunda, a place that, occasionally, I get invited up here and I walk into, I was impressed by the fact that I wasn't amongst heroes who were statues; I was impressed that I was amongst heroes who still live. I thank you for the honor you have brought to our country. And the medal you're about to receive means our country honors you, and rightly so.

And I want to thank Senator Carl Levin and Sergeant Rangel. [*Laughter*] Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your leadership on this issue. I have a strong interest in World War II airmen; I was raised by one. He flew with a group of brave young men who endured difficult times in the defense of our country.

Yet for all they sacrificed and all they lost, in a way, they were very fortunate, because they never had the burden of having their every mission, their every success, their every failure viewed through the color of their skin.

Nobody told them they were a credit to their race. Nobody refused to return their salutes. Nobody expected them to bear the daily humiliations while wearing the uniform of their country.

It was different for the men in this room. When America entered World War II, it might have been easy for them to do little for our country. After all, the country didn't do much for them. Even the Nazis asked why African American men would fight for a country that treated them so unfairly. Yet the Tuskegee Airmen were eager to join up.

You know, I'm interested in the story about a young man who was so worried that the Army might change its mind about allowing him to fly, that he drove immediately to the train station. He left his car, as well as $1,000 worth of photography equipment. He never saw his car; he never saw his camera; but he became a flyer.

These men in our presence felt a special sense of urgency. They were fighting two wars: One was in Europe, and the other took place in the hearts and minds of our citizens. That's why we're here. The white commander of the Tuskegee airfield was once asked, with all seriousness, "How do African Americans fly?"—kind of reflecting the ignorance of the times, they said, "How do African Americans fly?" He said, "Oh, they fly just like everybody else flies—stick and rudder." [*Laughter*]

Soon, Americans in their kitchens and living rooms were reading the headlines. You probably didn't realize it at the time, but you were making headlines at home, headlines that spoke about daring pilots winning a common battle.

And little by little, every victory at war was translated to a victory here in the United States. And we're in the presence of men who are earning those victories, important victories, leaders who pierced the unquestioned prejudices of a different society. You gave African Americans a sense of pride and possibility.

You saw that pride and awe—I'm sure you remember—in the faces of young children who came up to you right after the war and tugged on your uniforms and said, "Mister, can you really fly an airplane?" Some of you have been in Germany and Iraq, and you still see that sense of pride.

I appreciate your going. I appreciate the fact that one of our young soldiers today took pictures for a—of you for a scrapbook for his children. I appreciate the fact that one of our soldiers today said, "It is not often that you get a chance to meet the guys who have paved the path for you."

The Tuskegee Airmen helped win a war, and you helped change our Nation for the better. Yours is the story of the human spirit, and it ends like all great stories do—with wisdom and lessons and hope for tomorrow. And the medal that we confer today means that we're doing a small part to ensure that your story will be told and honored for generations to come.

And I would like to offer a gesture to help atone for all the unreturned salutes and unforgivable indignities. And so, on behalf of the Office I hold and a country that honors you, I salute you for the service to the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Proclamation 8119—Cancer Control Month, 2007

March 29, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Cancer Control Month is an opportunity to educate all Americans about cancer, to raise awareness about treatments, and to renew our commitment to fighting this deadly disease.

Through developments in medical science, we continue to make advances in the prevention and treatment of cancer. Yet millions of our citizens continue to live with some form of this disease, and it remains the second leading cause of death in the United States. Individuals can reduce their risk of developing cancer by practicing healthy eating habits, exercising, limiting sun exposure,

avoiding tobacco, knowing their family history, and getting regular screenings from the doctor.

My Administration remains committed to the fight against cancer. In 2005, the National Cancer Institute and the National Human Genome Research Institute launched the Cancer Genome Atlas, a revolutionary research project to help scientists understand the genetic sources of cancer. The discoveries from this project have the potential to bring about rapid advances in cancer research. And last year the National Institutes of Health invested more than $5 billion in cancer research.

We are making progress. Cancer related deaths have declined for 2 consecutive years. Thirty years ago, there were only 3 million cancer survivors, and today there are more than 10 million.

During Cancer Control Month, we remember those who have lost their lives to cancer. And we commend the determination, courage, and strength of cancer survivors. Our Nation is grateful for medical professionals, researchers, family members, and friends who support cancer patients. Their dedication to these individuals is a reflection of the true spirit of America. Our country will continue the fight against cancer until it is won.

In 1938, the Congress of the United States passed a joint resolution (52 Stat. 148; 36 U.S.C. 103) as amended, requesting the President to issue an annual proclamation declaring April as "Cancer Control Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2007 as Cancer Control Month. I encourage citizens, government agencies, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other interested groups to join in activities that will increase awareness about the steps Americans can take to prevent and control cancer.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:23 a.m., April 2, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 30, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 3.

Remarks During a Visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center

March 30, 2007

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you all for joining me. Every time I come to Walter Reed, my spirits are lifted. They're first lifted by the soldiers and marines who are recovering from some very tough wounds. I had the honor of pinning the Purple Heart on quite a few people today, and I am always impressed by their resolve and their commitment to the country. Every time I come to Walter Reed, I'm also impressed by the caregivers—the docs, the nurses, the people who spend many hours trying to heal those who have been wounded in service to our country.

The soldiers and marines stay here only for a few months, but the compassion they receive here stays with them for a lifetime. And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I do want to thank our docs and our nurses and caregivers for providing extraordinary health care to the people who wear the uniform. I know full well that the work you do is behind the scenes. In other words, you don't get a lot of glory for what you do, but you certainly do from the family members who first come here, and they see their loved one on a bed, wondering whether or not that person will ever walk again. And then, 6 months later, the body is returning, and the spirit is strong—the person is up and moving around. The family and the soldier is impressed by that care.

Americans must understand that the problems recently uncovered at Walter Reed were not the problems of medical care. The quality of care at this fantastic facility is great, and it needs to remain that way. Independent analysis have given extremely high marks for

the quality of care here. In other words, this isn't my assessment, nor is it the assessment of people I have talked to—the families, although that's what they believe. It is also the assessment of a joint commission, which accredits thousands of American hospitals. And this commission has given Walter Reed the highest possible rating, a gold seal of approval.

Recently, the commission performed a surprise inspection. In other words, they didn't give a bunch of notice; they showed up and verified the high quality of care here. I want to congratulate you for what you're doing.

The problems at Walter Reed were caused by bureaucratic and administrative failures. The system failed you, and it failed our troops. And we're going to fix it.

I met some of the soldiers who had been housed in Building 18. I was disturbed by their accounts of what went wrong. It is not right to have someone volunteer to wear our uniform and not get the best possible care. I apologize for what they went through, and we're going to fix the problem.

And that's exactly what this Government is going to do. We're not going to be satisfied until everybody gets the kind of care that their folks and families expect. And that's what I expect. And we've taken important steps to achieve the objective.

First, Defense Secretary Gates has insisted on accountability in the military command. He made changes in leadership. He made tough decisions, because he, like me, demands results. I welcome General Schoomaker, but I also welcome General Tucker. Tucker is not a doc. As General Schoomaker informed me, he is a "bureaucracy buster." His job is to make sure that the bureaucracy does not get in the way of making sure every soldier, marine, and their families get the best possible care. And I welcome you to the command, and thank you.

Secretary Gates, as I said, has approved a non-medical deputy commander—that's Tucker. Building 18 has been closed. We're fixing that which needs to be fixed, including, interestingly enough, putting a new roof on it. The patients from Building 18 have been transferred into Abrams Hall, and I'm pleased to report that living conditions there are of high quality.

We have formed three working groups to help address problems that may exist and may arise. I want to share some of what the—the strategy behind the working groups is, and that is, first, Gates established—Secretary Gates established an independent review group, and that was primarily to examine the conditions at Walter Reed and Bethesda. The group will recommend ways to ensure you have what you need to improve medical care.

I heard one recommendation, in other words, one of the care providers said, "Make sure we always have the best possible equipment; we want to be on the leading edge of technology, not the trailing edge." I agree completely. Those are the kinds of things that Secretary Gates's commission is going to be looking into.

Veterans Affairs Secretary Nicholson is leading a task force of Cabinet officers to identify potential gaps in the services our wounded troops receive as they return from the battlefield. In other words, we want all hands on deck here at the Federal level to make sure that health care is as good as it possibly can be. I'm not talking about the health care in the operating room; I'm talking about the bureaucracies that may prevent good health care from being delivered.

Finally, Bob Dole and Donna Shalala will chair a bipartisan Presidential Commission on care for our wounded warriors. They will conduct a comprehensive view of the entire system for providing physical and emotional care to service men and women injured in this war. They will make sure that that person gets high-quality care from the time they suffer their wounds through their return to civilian life.

We want to make sure, for example, that any transfer from the Defense Department to the Veterans Affairs Department is smooth and that there's not bureaucratic delay or obstacles in the way of making sure that we can report to our fellow citizens that people are getting the best possible health care.

I want to thank those who are working in these groups, and I'm looking forward to getting their recommendations, because I want

to make sure our military families can be assured that their loved ones will get the very best.

This military system of ours, when you really think about it, just across the country, it's very complex, and it's large. Yet there's nothing complex about what we owe our troops; we owe them the best. That's what you believe here at Walter Reed. I have seen the care and dedication that you give on a daily basis. I just came from the therapy rooms, the physical therapy and the vocational therapy rooms. I see people patiently working with a wounded soldier on how to pick up cards and play cards with a new prosthesis. It's just hours of help all because the people here recognize each human being matters, each person counts, and each person has endless possibilities, even though they may have received terrible wounds on the battlefield.

None of the problems that we have uncovered can overshadow the great work you do here. That's what you have to know. It's a special calling to serve those who serve our country. It requires a unique person to come here on a daily basis and to heal the hurts of those who served our country.

And so our Nation is grateful, and I'm proud to be your Commander in Chief.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Michael S. Tucker, USA, deputy commanding general, Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Notice—Intention To Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Panama

March 30, 2007

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002, I have notified the Congress of my intention to enter into a free trade agreement with the Republic of Panama.

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of that Act, this notice shall be published in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 30, 2007.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:26 a.m., March 30, 2007]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on April 2.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Notice of Intention To Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Panama

March 30, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002, (Public Law 107–210; the "Trade Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intention to enter into a free trade agreement with the Republic of Panama.

The United States-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (the "Agreement") will generate export opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, and companies, help create jobs in the United States, and help American consumers save money while offering them more choices. The Agreement will also benefit the people of Panama by providing economic opportunity and by strengthening democracy.

Consistent with the Trade Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the Agreement. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress in developing appropriate legislation to approve and implement this Agreement.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 24

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

March 25

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

March 26

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, on the South Lawn, the President participated in a demonstration of alternative fuel vehicles.

March 27

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with White House Press Secretary Tony Snow. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, at the U.S. Postal Service Vehicle Maintenance Facility, the President participated in a demonstration of alternative fuel vehicles.

March 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

March 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the East Room, he met with the House Republican Conference.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President participated in a photo opportunity with members of the Children's Miracle Network.

The President announced his intention to designate the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to Dakar, Senegal, to attend the inauguration of President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal on April 3: Elaine L. Chao (head of delegation); Janice L. Jacobs; Louis W. Sullivan; Bobby Pittman, Jr.; and R. Timothy Ziemer.

March 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he visited with patients and medical personnel in the Occupational Therapy Unit and the Physical Therapy Unit. He also presented Purple Heart medals to 11 soldiers.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru to the White House on April 23.

The President declared an emergency in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by record snow and near record snow on February 28 to March 2.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Alabama by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures as a result of severe storms and tornadoes that struck the State on March 1.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Georgia by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures as a result of severe storms and tornadoes that struck the State on March 1–2.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 26

Janet E. Garvey,
of Massachusetts, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cameroon.

R. Lyle Laverty,
of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, vice Harold Craig Manson.

R. Niels Marquardt,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Madagascar, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Union of Comoros.

Withdrawn March 28

Sam Fox,
of Missouri, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Belgium, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

Submitted March 29

Jennifer Walker Elrod,
of Texas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, vice Patrick E. Higginbotham, retired.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released March 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Released March 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on Egypt's referendum on amendments to its Constitution

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on Senate action on emergency supplemental appropriations

Fact sheet: Twenty in Ten: Powering Large Vehicle Fleets With Alternative Fuels

Released March 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1129

Released March 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Released March 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit by President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Iowa

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on additional disaster assistance to Alabama

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on additional disaster assistance to Georgia

Acts Approved by the President

Approved March 28

H.R. 1129 / Public Law 110–16
To provide for the construction, operation, and maintenance of an arterial road in St. Louis County, Missouri

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